



Things to do around the island



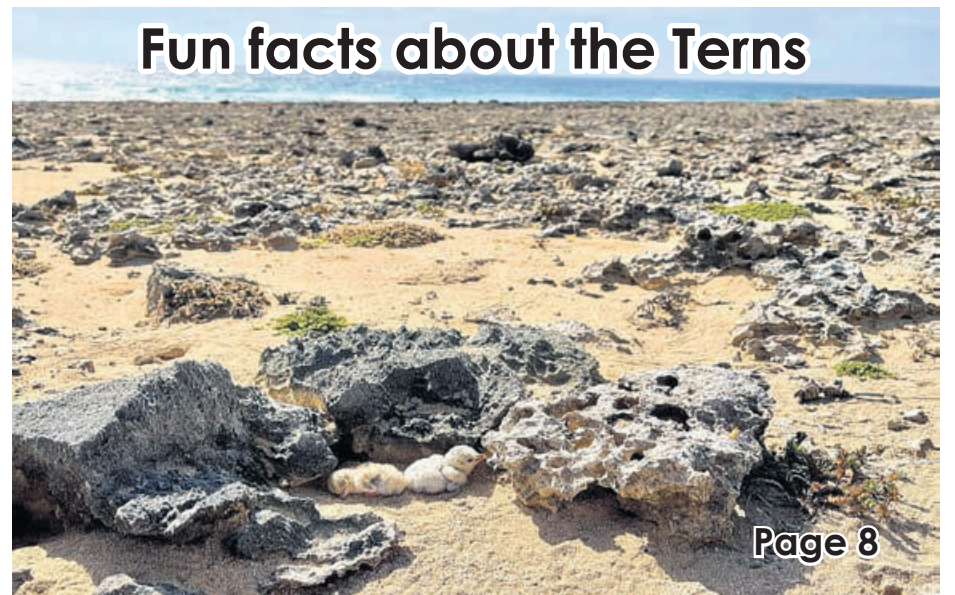
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Aruban treasure: Sea Glass



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Fun facts about the Terns



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The blooming highway: How America's roadsides became a pollinator paradise

For the modern traveler, the view through the windshield is undergoing a colorful transformation. The once-monotonous stretches of mowed grass and gray gravel that lined the nation's interstate system are being replaced by a vibrant tapestry of black-eyed Susans, purple cone-flowers, and goldenrod. This isn't just a win for aesthetic tourism; it is the result of a massive national initiative to transform the American roadside into a sanctuary for the country's most important workers: the bees. As you head out on your next vacation, look closely at the "weeds" along the shoulder. You are witnessing the "Pollinator Corridor" movement, a collaborative effort between the Department of Transportation and conservation groups that has turned millions of acres of federal and state land into a lifeline for struggling pollinator species.

From mow to meadow
For decades, the standard procedure for highway maintenance was simple: keep it short. States spent millions of dollars annually on mowing equipment and



A honeybee pollinates a flower on a lamb's ear plant on May 16, 2021 in San Anselmo, California.

fuel to maintain a manicured, golf-course look along highways. However, ecologists realized that these vast "green deserts" offered zero nutritional value to bees, butterflies, and birds.

By shifting to a "reduced mow" schedule, states are allowing native plants to return to their natural cycles. "We used to fight nature every summer," says Marcus Thorne, a landscape archi-

tect for the Federal Highway Administration. "Now, we're inviting it back. By letting these native flowers bloom, we aren't just saving the bees we're saving millions in taxpayer dollars previously spent on diesel and labor."

The interstate "rest stop" for bees

The crisis facing American pollinators specifically the honeybee and the mon-

arch butterfly has been well-documented. Habitat loss has been their greatest threat. However, the U.S. highway system provides a unique solution: a continuous, uninterrupted network of land that spans the entire continent.

These roadsides act as "superhighways" for insects. A bee can now travel from the midwest to the southern coast with a reliable source

of nectar every few miles. These aren't just patches of flowers; they are strategic "rest stops" that allow species to migrate, find mates, and strengthen their genetic diversity. For the traveler, this means that the scenic overlook you stop at for a photo is likely buzzing with a level of biodiversity not seen in half a century.

Safety meets scenery

Critics initially worried that taller vegetation might obscure sightlines or attract large wildlife like deer closer to the road. However, the 2026 data shows the opposite. By planting specific low-growing native grasses near the pavement and saving the tall wildflowers for the deeper embankments, engineers have maintained perfect visibility.

Furthermore, these native root systems are much deeper than standard turf grass. This means the roadsides are now better at absorbing rainwater, reducing flash flooding on the asphalt, and preventing soil erosion during heavy spring storms. The "Bee Sanctuary" is, quite literally, holding the road together. □

Trump's triumphal arch gets official name

Washington, United States

It's been dubbed the "Arc de Trump." But now President Donald Trump's latest building project has an official name -- the "United

States Triumphal Arch." White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt revealed the formal title on Wednesday, saying the giant structure was being

built to mark the 250th anniversary of U.S. independence.

"In honor of this historic occasion, President Trump and the Department of Interior will submit plans for the United States Triumphal Arch," Leavitt told reporters.

Showing off a picture that she initially held upside down, Leavitt said the "monumental" arch would stand 250 feet (76.2 meters) tall "in honor of 250 years."

Its colossal height, including a huge golden Lady Liberty statue on top, means it will dwarf perhaps its most famous predecessor, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, which stands at 164 feet.

In fact it is set to be the

largest structure of its kind in the world, pipping Mexico City's Monument to the Revolution and knocking Pyongyang's Arch of Triumph to third place.

Plans for the arch were first revealed in October when AFP journalists spotted a model on Trump's desk in the Oval Office, after which it was quickly dubbed the "Arc de Trump" by US media.

Trump revealed the first full renderings for the structure last Friday.

The arch is one of several architectural projects -- including the construction of a gigantic White House ballroom and renovations to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts -- that Trump has undertaken to

leave a mark on Washington in his second term.

Critics say the gold-accented arch, which will tower over the 99-foot-tall Lincoln Memorial, is a monument to the 79-year-old Trump's vanity.

The arch will partly be funded by US taxpayers, getting \$2 million in special funds from the US National Endowment for the Humanities, with up to \$13 million in funds to match any donations, ABC News reported.

But Leavitt said it was aimed at celebrating U.S. national pride.

"Long after everyone in this room is gone, our children and grandchildren will remain inspired by this national monument," she told reporters. □



White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt shows an artist's rendering of U.S. President Donald Trump's planned Triumphal Arch during a press briefing in the Brady Briefing Room at the White House in Washington, DC, on April 15, 2026.

The safer scenic route: U.S. road fatalities hit historic low

For decades, the great American road trip has been a symbol of freedom, punctuated by the hum of tires on asphalt and the unfolding of the vast continental landscape. However, for many travelers, that sense of freedom was often shadowed by a lingering anxiety over safety. This week, new data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has provided the ultimate peace of mind: road-related fatalities in the United States have plummeted to their second-lowest level on record.

This statistical milestone isn't just a win for data analysts; it is a profound victory for every family currently packing a cooler and loading a suitcase into a trunk. As we enter the peak spring and summer travel season, the American highway is becoming a sanctuary of safety rather than a source of stress.

The tech guardian on your dashboard

Experts attribute this dramatic shift to a "perfect storm" of safety innovations that have finally reached a critical mass in the American fleet. Features that were once



Cars pass through the southbound toll plaza of the Golden Gate Bridge on November 25, 2025 in San Francisco, California.

considered luxury additions such as automatic emergency braking, lane-departure warnings, and blind-spot detection are now standard in most vehicles. These technologies act as a silent co-pilot, correcting human error before it can lead to a collision.

"We are seeing the results of a decade of engineering excellence," says Dr. Elena Rossi, a transport safety consultant. "It's no longer just about surviving a crash;

it's about the vehicle's ability to prevent the crash from happening in the first place. For the vacationing family, this means the car is looking out for them, even when the driver is distracted by a beautiful view or a backseat singalong."

Infrastructure for the people

Beyond the car itself, the "Safe Streets for All" initiative a federal program that funded thousands of local infrastructure projects over the last few years is

paying massive dividends. Travelers will notice subtler changes on their journeys: clearer signage, high-visibility road markings, and "rumble strips" that are more effective than ever. In many towns along popular tourist routes, "road diets" have narrowed lanes and added protected bike paths, slowing down traffic and making main-street strolls safer for pedestrians and motorists alike.

A cultural shift to-

ward mindfulness

Perhaps most encouraging is the change in driver behavior. Following a period of increased recklessness during the early 2020s, a new culture of "mindful motoring" has taken hold. National awareness campaigns and stricter enforcement of distracted driving laws have begun to shift the social tide. Texting while driving is increasingly viewed with the same social stigma as drunk driving, leading to a more focused and polite driving environment.

The road ahead

For the readers of this vacation newspaper, this news is an invitation to explore. Whether you are navigating the winding curves of the Pacific Coast Highway or the long, straight stretches of the Great Plains, the environment around you is more forgiving than it has been in nearly a century. As we look toward a future with even more integrated smart-road technology, the goal of "Vision Zero" zero road deaths no longer feels like a utopian dream. It feels like an approaching destination. So, adjust your mirrors, buckle your seatbelts, and take a deep breath of relief. □

Maine to become first state to bar major data centers

New York, United States

Legislators in Maine on Tuesday endorsed a moratorium on building large data centers, becoming the first U.S. state to try and rein in rampant construction driven by the AI race. The bill was passed by the state house and senate and is on its way to the desk of Democratic Governor Janet Mills, according to its sponsor, Representative Melanie Sachs.

It will become law if not vetoed by Mills.

"This bill positions Maine to respond deliberately and responsibly to a rapidly evolving industry," said Sachs.

"People and communities across the state have been asking the Legislature to take action and tempo-

rarily pause these projects, which could have significant impacts on ratepayers, our electric grid and our environment."

A boom in generative artificial intelligence has sent data center demand skyrocketing, with dozens of projects springing up across the United States. The buildout comes at a cost, as the power-hungry facilities are straining local grids and driving up electricity bills.

Data centers also typically have massive footprints, taking up land that could be used for housing, businesses, recreation or green space.

Public sentiment is hardening, with a recent Quinnipiac University poll finding 65 percent of Americans op-

pose having a data center built in their community.

If signed into law, the Maine bill would pause new data center construction until November of next year.

It also calls for the creation of a council to assess risks and benefits of proposed data centers and provide input for planners.

Currently, there are no large-scale data centers in Maine, but some projects have been disclosed in recent weeks, according to Sachs.

Data center construction spending in the United States has surged in recent years, with tech firms pouring tens of billions of dollars into building out infrastructure amid the race to lead in AI.

The Maine law would pro-

hibit local authorities from issuing permits for data centers with electrical capacity exceeding 20 megawatts.

Maine is among the U.S. states that have seen home electricity bills soar in recent years, according to the U.S. Energy Information

Administration.

Data center projects were rejected in two cities in the state last year by elected officials who accused developers of concealing how much electricity and water the facilities would use, local media reported. □



A view of a 49.5 megawatt three-level data center under construction on April 14, 2026 in Vernon, California.

Tom Cruise shares sneak peek of Inarritu comedy 'Digger' at CinemaCon

Las Vegas, United States

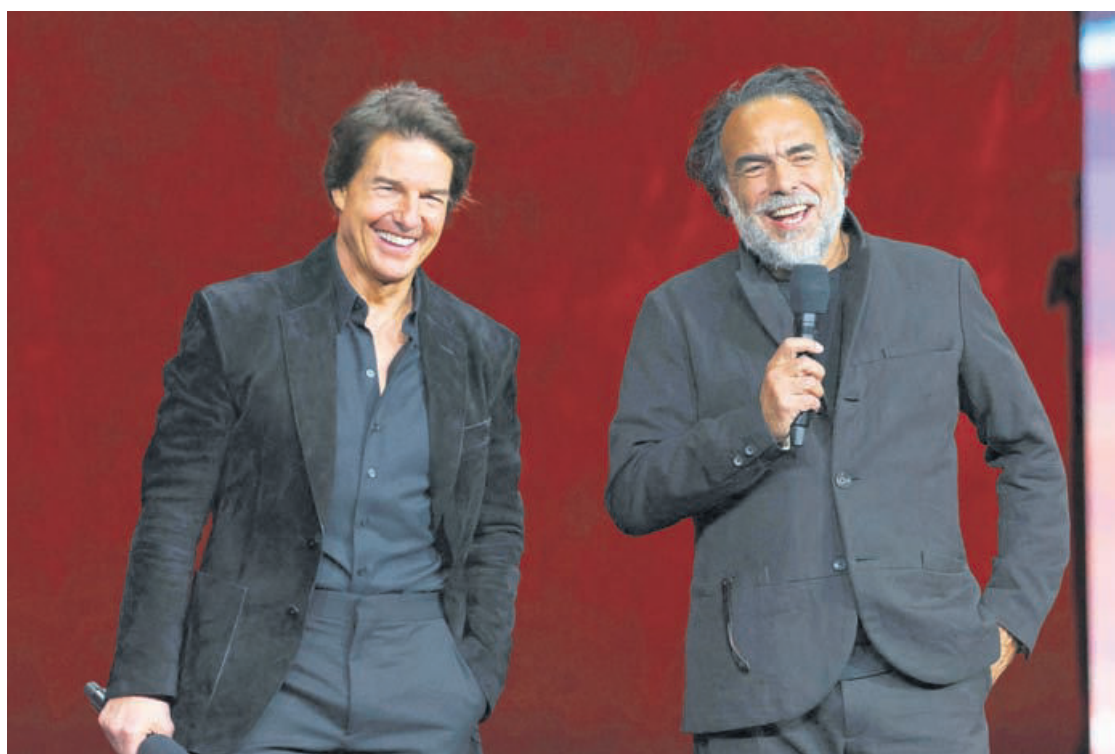
Hollywood superstar Tom Cruise and Mexican filmmaker Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu thrilled CinemaCon attendees on Tuesday with a sneak peek of their comedy "Digger," one of the releases highlighted by Warner Bros. at the Las Vegas industry convention. The four-time Oscar nominee was unrecognizable in the clip, seen with an older, more eccentric look while cradling a white cat in a mansion filled with taxidermied animals.

"The movie is wild, it's funny," said Cruise, who received a standing ovation from the packed room. Inarritu said the role "could possibly be the most challenging" for Cruise.

"We know that he's fearless, the stunts, the planes, the jumps, but I have to say embodying this character, this is another kind of fearless," he said.

Warner Bros. gave a splashy presentation on the second day of CinemaCon, riding high on the recent successes of "Sinners," "Weapons" and Oscar best picture winner "One Battle After Another."

But the event did not address rival Paramount Skydance's mega-bid for the legacy studio, which has sent ripples of concern through an industry wary of



U.S. actor Tom Cruise (L) and Mexican filmmaker Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu promote the upcoming film "Digger" during the Warner Bros presentation at CinemaCon at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace on April 14, 2026 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

consolidation and fearful for the future.

Pins bearing the slogan "#BlockTheMerger" were spotted being distributed throughout Caesars Palace, where the cinema trade show is taking place. An open letter opposing the merger was co-signed by hundreds of Hollywood stars and filmmakers, including Denis Villeneuve and J. J. Abrams -- both of whom showcased upcoming releases during the Warner Bros. event.

Pam Abdy and Mike De Luca, co-chairs and CEOs of Warner Bros. Motion

Pictures Group, recapped achievements from the past year and emphasized the uptick in film productions from six in 2022, when they took over, to 11 last year.

"That is what committing to originality can get you," Abdy said.

De Luca promised 14 releases this year, adding that the studio is aiming for 18 in 2027.

The presentation included footage from "Dune: Part Three," introduced by director Villeneuve alongside stars Timothee Chalamet, Zendaya and Jason Momoa.

Other previews included "Practical Magic 2," starring Nicole Kidman and Sandra Bullock, "The Great Beyond" from director Abrams, as well as "Supergirl" directed by Craig Gillespie.

- Godzilla in New York -

Earlier in the day, Japan's most famous monster thundered into CinemaCon as theater-owners got their first look at "Godzilla Minus Zero," which sees the creature rampage through New York.

Directed by Takashi Yamazaki, the offering from Japan's Toho studio is a se-

quel to 2023's "Godzilla Minus One", which became an international sensation with a box office haul of \$116 million as it bagged an Oscar for visual effects. Yamazaki told cinema-owners that "the immense scale and terror of Godzilla, as well as the human struggle to survive... (is) going to push your screens and your audiences to their limits." The film which hits U.S. theaters on November 6 and stars Ryunosuke Kamiki and Minami Hamabe -- is set in 1949, two years after the events of "Minus One," picking up the story of the Shikishima family as they face an even tougher challenge.

Yamazaki, who also wrote the screenplay, offered a behind-the-scenes look at the production, along with clips featuring scenes of destruction and the arrival of the imposing monster in New York.

On Tuesday, attendees at the annual get-together also got their first look at the slate of upcoming releases from indie distributor Neon. The company which handled the Oscar-winning films "Parasite" and "Anora" announced it would release "Hope" this year, a South Korean sci-fi thriller starring Hwang Jung-min, Zo In-sung, Michael Fassbender and Alicia Vikander. □

Bonjour! 'The White Lotus' starts filming season 4 in France: HBO



(L-R) Actors Natasha Rothwell, Sam Rockwell, Parker Posey and Jason Isaacs from "The White Lotus" attend the TV Academy's Inaugural Televerse Festival at JW Marriott LA Live on August 16, 2025 in Los Angeles, California.

Los Angeles, United States

The highly anticipated fourth season of "The White Lotus" has begun filming on the French Riviera, HBO announced Wednesday, with a cast that includes Helena Bonham Carter and Steve Coogan.

The black comedy, which explores the comings and goings of guests and staff at a different luxury hotel every season, will have the Cannes Film Festival as its backdrop for its fourth iteration.

The Emmy-winning creation by Mike Allen, is being shot in Cannes, St. Tropez, and Monaco.

Although some scenes will be filmed in Paris, "the story will remain along the Cote d'Azur," HBO said.

The network also revealed the real-life

luxury spot Airelles Château de la Mes-sardière will be transformed into the White Lotus du Cap, while the Hôtel Martinez will serve as the fictional White Lotus Cannes. Alongside Bonham Carter ("Harry Potter," "The Crown") and British comedian Coogan, the series will also star France's Vincent Cassel ("Black Swan," "Ocean's Twelve") and Heather Graham ("Boogie Nights" and "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me.")

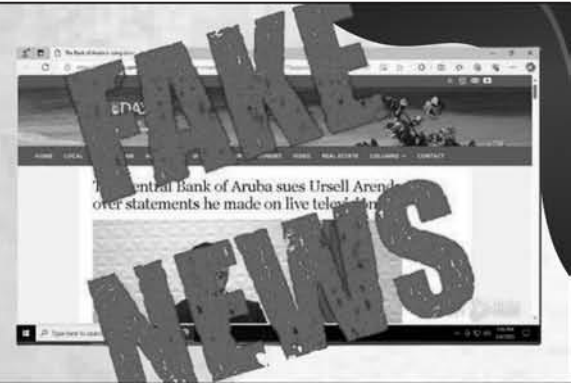
Previous seasons of "The White Lotus" were filmed in Hawaii, Italy, and Thailand, and featured stars such as Jennifer Coolidge, Sydney Sweeney, Aubrey Plaza, and Walton Goggins.

The Cannes Film Festival will take place this year from May 12 to May 23. □

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EU says age-check app 'ready' in push to protect children online

Brussels, Belgium

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen said Wednesday that an EU-developed age verification app was ready to go, as the bloc pushes to better protect children from online harm.

The app should be rolled out in the coming months and aims to replace pop-up banners asking users to click to confirm they are over 18 to access adult content sites, EU officials explained.

"This app will allow users to prove their age when accessing online platforms. Just like shops ask for proof of age for people buying alcoholic beverages," von der Leyen told journalists in Brussels.

Brussels has been under pressure to come up with more stringent measures to safeguard children online as several EU capitals move ahead with plans to ban social media under a certain age.

To that end, a small group of EU countries including France and Italy last year started testing the age-



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and EU Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy Henna Virkkunen (L) address a statement about the EU digital age verification app in Brussels on April 15, 2026.

check app that von der Leyen said Wednesday was now "technically ready". The app uses the same model adopted during the Covid pandemic, when Brussels developed a tool allowing people to prove they had been vaccinated as countries reopened after lockdowns, she said.

Once it becomes available, users would be able to download it from an online store, set it up with their passport or ID card and then use it to prove they are a certain age.

EU digital rules require sites including porn, gambling and alcohol sellers to put in place "effective age assur-

ance methods" to ensure only adults visit their pages. But the European Commission, the bloc's digital enforcer, has argued the tools deployed so far are not good enough.

In March, it accused four porn sites of breaching the bloc's rules by allowing minors to access with a simple

click confirming they are over 18.

"As platforms don't have proper age verification tools in place, we came up with the solution ourselves," said EU's digital chief Henna Virkkunen.

EU officials said the EU app will serve as a benchmark to test compliance and the effectiveness of alternative methods.

"Online platforms can easily rely on our age verification app. So there are no more excuses," von der Leyen said.

"Europe offers a free and easy to use solution that can shield our children from harmful and illegal content".

The app is "completely anonymous" to ensure people cannot be tracked when accessing websites, and based on open-source code, allowing non-EU states to adopt it if they wish.

Alternatives would have to respect similar privacy standards, Brussels said.

"We don't want platforms to scan our passport or face," Virkkunen said. □

New tools rescue old art at Madrid's Prado museum

Madrid, Spain

In a quiet space secluded from the throngs of daily visitors to Madrid's Prado art museum, a team of experts perpetuate an ancient tradition of restoring centuries-old European cultural treasures.

Creations by some of art's most illustrious names Goya, Velazquez, Rubens, Caravaggio, Bosch and El Greco -- are conserved in the vast, bright space at one of the world's most-visited museums.

The Prado has always put an emphasis on the conservation and restoration of art since it opened to the public in 1819.

Cutting-edge technology and modern tools to analyse and treat paintings and sculptures allow Almudena, Marta, Maria, Alvaro, Alicia, Elena, Sonia and Eva to maintain the tradition.

The team is capable of caring for the museum's most prized collections as well as works from other institutions.

In February, the Prado launched the restoration of "Pablo de Valladolid", an emblematic portrait that Spanish master Velazquez produced in the 17th century. But the work will first undergo a deep technical analysis by new equipment, the museum said in a statement.

Scanning technology will allow the experts to identify and locate the materials used by the artist, while multispectral infrared reflectography will reveal details invisible to the naked eye.

Everything contributes to a deeper understanding of the artist's technique, the work's state of conservation and preparing its restoration. □



An art restorer cleans the painting "Judith and Holofernes" by Italian painter Domenico Tintoretto at the Prado museum's painting restoration department in Madrid on October 7, 2025.

'Listening bars' bloom as hottest new nightlife trend

Paris, France

Not quite like a gig or going clubbing, but there's a new night out spreading in cities around the world: an evening at a "listening bar". An increasing number of venues are adopting the concept, which originated in Japan, of installing high-end sound systems good enough to impress the most demanding audio geek.

Some offer a social experience over drinks, with the music playing in the background, while others sell admission to "active listening" sessions where the songs and the speakers are the focus of hushed attention. "It really makes you listen to every word, every instrument, every note," Camille Calloch, 31, told AFP as she left a listening session dedicated to British neo-soul star Sampha at "Listener" bar in central Paris. "It's become one of the ways I enjoy music, along with concerts, my headphones, bars and festivals," she added.

Listener's underground, soundproofed audio room has a system worth around 200,000 euros (\$235,000) at catalogue prices, with sculptural speakers from niche Greek manufacturer



This photograph shows a "listening room", a small room carpeted and designed for focused music listening, at the Cafe Shin in Paris on December 12, 2025.

Tune Audio, says co-founder Jerome Thomas.

Listening to albums there reveals subtleties that would go unnoticed in other settings, with the treble crystal-clear and the bass strong enough to be felt physically.

The idea is to combine the vibrancy of a live-music experience and the comfort of listening at home all in a way that responds to changes in music consumption habits.

"It's a completely different way of relating to mu-

sic," Thomas explained. "It's not quick consumption like you have on streaming platforms, with small headphones.

"We really wanted people to take the time to rediscover their favorite artists."

- Sound loss -

Thomas, who worked in the medical sector before, says one of the joys of running the bar is seeing clients react to sessions dedicated to artists from Marvin Gaye to Mariah Carey.

"They come to me saying

'I thought I knew that track by heart, I've been listening to it for 15 years, but I heard new instruments, I could hear the mix from the sound engineer'," he says. Recorded music has never been so ubiquitous and portable, yet most people consume it on Bluetooth headphones or low-quality portable speakers, using streaming platforms as the source.

The music is being highly compressed in order to stream smoothly, and then

to be transmitted wirelessly sharply reducing audio quality compared to CDs or analogue-era vinyl.

Some listening bars use high-quality streaming services such as Tidal or Qobuz but most choose vinyl -- and always with high-end cabling, and often with tube or valve amplifiers.

The vibrancy of the listening bar scene contrasts with a decline in clubbing in many cities where rising rents and changing lifestyles among younger generations have hit demand.

"There's totally been an explosion of these places lately," the co-owner of the New York listening bar Eavesdrop, Dan Wissinger, told AFP.

He and his associates opened their Brooklyn venue in 2022, with one room for active listening and the other more social.

A key feature for any self-respecting listening bar is having its rooms designed for music, he said.

"If they don't have acoustic treatment, then they're just fake listening bars," Wissinger explained. "In a hospitality space, if you don't have good damping, you're not going to be hearing music first." □

Afghans comb riverbed in search of gold dust

Afghanistan

In the jagged Hindu Kush in eastern Afghanistan, hundreds of men dug into the rocky bed of the Kunar River searching for a few grams of gold dust as an alternative source of income.

At the foot of imposing peaks, some still covered in snow in April, they toiled near the border with Pakistan to find the valuable glinting specks in a country where wages are low. Below a village of mud-brick houses and small terraced wheat plots in Kharwalu, Kunar province, they dug into a dry section of the riverbed before sifting through their piles of rocks using river water. Fifty-year-old Shahzad

Gollalah was among the gold prospectors, having abandoned construction work a seven-hour drive from his home in Kabul.

"There are not many job

opportunities in the country, and in this way, we have created work for ourselves," said the father of eight.

But "the gold nuggets we

find are usually smaller than a grain of wheat," he added.

Downstream, in Ghaziabad, hundreds of men hacked into the mountain with picks, then carried a sack down on their backs along a steep slope and emptied it onto a sieve to filter gold from the sand.

Others scooped river water into yellow jerrycans attached to long wooden handles, pouring it over the sieve so that the smaller stones, which may contain gold flakes, slid down onto a mat. A nugget would sometimes appear in a metal pan after two further rounds of sifting.

Gul Ahmad Jan, 35, said he can earn a substantial amount in just a week.

"We can get up to about one gram of gold," which can fetch up to 8,000 Afghanis (\$125), he told AFP. Afghanistan's resources were rarely exploited during years of conflict, although a Kunar official said gold panning has happened there for more than a decade.

Najibullah Hanif, the province's information chief, said residents learnt the techniques from miners who arrived from gold-rich provinces.

"Some started to dig with machines, an excavator; some locals came and asked the Islamic Emirate (of Afghanistan) to stop them because it destroys the river and the mountains," said Hanafi. □



This photograph taken on April 13, 2026 shows an Afghan man scouring for gold using the traditional gold-panning technique, after sorting nuggets from mountainside stones excavated from the Kunar riverbed in the Kharwalu area of Naray district, Kunar province.

Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas

SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural



influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas – more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history

If you are looking for history

San Nicolas has it.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phos-

phate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

The Community Museum holds a remarkable collection that spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaux of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barbershop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of ed-

ucation or enjoyment.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. □

Today is going to be a good day

(Oranjestad)—Here's why: **Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.**

Nature Calls

The Arikok National park is

worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots.

The guided tours are even free of charge. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it.

The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center.

For more information, visit the website www.acf.aw

The Lighthouse

No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Mon-



umentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Compa-

ny and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light.

Kayak in the Mangroves

Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout as it might get a little windy and rough you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef.

It's fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. □



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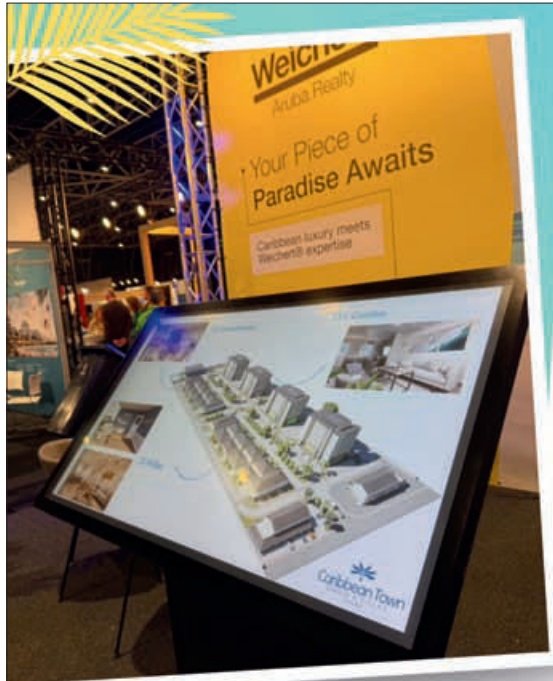
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Weichert® - Aruba Realty Marks Strong International Debut at The Second Home Beurs in Utrecht



ORANJESTAD, Weichert® - Aruba Realty has successfully concluded its international debut at the spring 2026 second Home Beurs in Utrecht, signaling a major step forward in the company's global reach strategy and its role in connecting European buyers with premium Aruban Real Estate opportunities.

Representing Aruba for the first time under the Weichert® - Aruba Realty partnership, the brokerage participated in a three-day exhibition at the Jaarsbeurs, which welcomed more than 13,000 attendees. The Yellow booth quickly attracted high traffic, drawing strong interest from second-home buyers, families, and retirees seeking stability, lifestyle, and long-term value outside Europe.

"Our goal was to authentically bring Aruba's 'One happy Island' lifestyle to the Dutch market, and the response was as expected. Our booth was well-received and welcoming, excellent lead quality, not only from the Netherlands but also from other countries in Europe," said Victor Acosta, Owner and Broker at Weichert® - Aruba Realty. "Being on the ground in Utrecht allowed us to have meaningful, informed conversations about Aruba's life quality and market status, giving prospective buyers the clarity and confidence needed to invest internationally, as well as positioning PalmAruba and Weichert® - Aruba Realty as the go-to and first in mind developer and real estate partnership in the Caribbean." Victor, continued.

Beyond brand visibility, the exhibition generated a substantial number of international leads. As the team returns to Aruba, efforts are now focused on personalized service centered on building relationships with people before selling or buying products.

This successful debut reinforces Weichert Aruba Realty's positioning as a key gateway for international buyers entering the Aruban real estate market, combining local expertise with global brand strength.

For more information about featured properties or to schedule a consultation, **please visit weichertaruba.com**



(Oranjestad)—Throughout the months of January to September, big groups of terns migrate to the island for breeding season. These terns are important seabirds, and their presence on Aruba is a unique phe-

nomenon. Here are some fun facts about terns.

Why terns matter

Terns (Sternchi in Papiamentu) migrate annually to Aruba for breeding season. Our island, hosts 10 differ-

Fun facts about the Terns

ent species of terns which is crucial for global seabird conservation. 90% of Caribbean population of Common Tern nest on Aruba, 25% of Global population of Cayenne Tern nest on Aruba and 25% of Caribbean population of Black Noddy nest on Aruba, making their conservation especially important.

Breeding season

The terns breed mainly along the north coast of Aruba as well as the San Nicolas Reef Islands (No-Go conservation zones). Baby Beach is a particularly special site for terns,

since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of Baby Beach near the open water is where a large group of terns spends the season searching for their partner—for life—to reproduce. In Aruba, there are ten different species of terns, all of which breed at different times. The ten species of terns that migrate to the island include the Cayenne Tern; Cabot's Tern; Common Tern; Roseate Tern; Least Tern; Brown Noddy; Black Noddy; Sooty Tern; Bridled Tern and the Royal

Tern

Main threats to these seabirds are human proximity, kite-surfing, unleashed dogs, ATVs/UTVs, Jet Ski's and pollution.

How to protect them

Aruba Conservation Foundation advises everyone to keep their distance from these seabirds, do not visit the reefs, do not fly drones around nesting areas, keep your dogs on leashes, do not drive on the coastline and do not leave trash thrown about. "Nature has no boundaries and its protection is a shared responsibility." □

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The Aruban way of life: Creating community with Cas di Torto



(Oranjestad)—The Aruban people understand that a happy life is spent in great ambience with your loved ones. Passed down from one generation to the other, building community has been a key aspect in forging our traditions and customs. The Cas di Torto (mud house) played a big role in cultivating community, bridging families together and forming close bonds with your neighbors something we highly value today.

Cas di Torto: History and construction

The origin of the Cas di Torto is said to date back to the early 19th century in the Paraguana Peninsula in Venezuela. Refugees who sought sanctuary on Aruba introduced this building method to the island.

The uprights of the walls were made with sturdy and straight wayaca or kwihi wood, or from thin mangrove struts. Then, the wattle walls were weaved

in using branches and twigs from the warero and sisal plant, daubed with a mixture of grass and mud. Finally, the walls got a coat of white plaster to seal everything in.

For roofing, corn stalks, palm fronds and straws were used, allowing air to flow freely through the house. This method of roofing was known throughout the ABC islands (Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire), but the use of cornstalks in Aruba eventually got replaced with use of mud and white plaster for the roofs. The white plaster all around made the houses look like cake, hence the name "Torto" (Spanish for "cake").

Building community

Building Torto houses was often a community effort. Young couples who were about to get married had to have their house built before they could tie the knot and start their own family. This is where the help of the community comes into

play.

Neighbors, extended family and friends would all help in the construction of a Torto House. And everyone had a role: The men oversaw the building of the house, and the women were tasked with collecting wood and straws, cooking and taking care of the little ones.

The couple's family were primarily responsible for feeding everyone who helped build the house.

Before construction, someone usually had the task to prepare the meal; going fishing or slaughter farm animals like goats, chicken or sheep. Even the older kids had their tasks; the older children of the family usually helped with collecting water and mixing the mud.

The average duration of constructing a Cas di Torto was 4 months.

At the end of a long day of work, everyone would gather around and enjoy

a feast of hearty food. This type of help from friends and family became a tradition and was called "paga lomba": You help me today; I'll help you tomorrow.

Nowadays, traditional Cas di Torto are rare, especially those that are still inhabited. Houses that do exist probably date back more than a century. □

Picture credits: Aruba National Library (BNA) and the Monumentbureau archive on Coleccion.aw

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For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)
According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park.

It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)
The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light

brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color.

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

Unique fauna of Aruba

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Coneu (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigro-nuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Coneu, has spread all over the island and has become

part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Coneu can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Coneu has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Coneu is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Coneu is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Coneu can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. □





Aruba's kite flying tradition

(Oranjestad)—Every year for King's Day, Arubans gather with friends and family to fly kites. Big or small, paper or plastic, blue skies fill up with these colorful flying contraptions, brightening our yearly celebration of the Dutch Monarch.

The tradition of flying kites starts at home in the weeks leading up to King's Day. These kites were traditionally made with things found in the nearby *mondi** and in

the kitchen at home. Using dried up cactus sticks for the frame, old news papers, and glue made from flour, water and salt to dry faster (some people even use cornstarch slurry as glue), kids usually make their own kites with their friends, parents or other close family members. Tails are made from old bed sheets, ripped and tied together to create a long string of fabric trailing behind the back end of the kite. To finish off the



process, people used fish lines or thin rope to tie three corners of the kite together. Another long string of rope is tied in the knotted center and bundled up, used to steer the kite as it flies in the air. Decorating the kite was especially important, and children would use paint to create their own design-

the more colorful, the better!

People usually fly their kites in big open fields, like empty soccer and baseball fields found all around the island around noon, when the sun is at its brightest. In the past few years, kite flying has become a sport

in which groups of people would battle against each other to see whose kite is the biggest, the prettiest, and whose could fly flawlessly and longer in the air. □

***Mondi: Aruban woods.**

Another treasure of Aruba's beaches: Sea Glass!

(Oranjestad)—It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea



glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process.

It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass.

The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass." The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges.

Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds

of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown, green and clear glass.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home.

A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 43 Staggering
1 Dominant
6 Crime outing
11 Illustrator Edward
12 Texas mission
13 Outcast
14 Prepares leftovers

DOWN

- 15 Netlike fabric
17 Order to Spot
18 Compared with
20 "Lonely Boy" singer
22 Charged bit
23 Batting position
26 Con-sumerist Ralph
28 Tennis star Agassi
29 Heroic deed
31 Chart model
32 Enthralled
33 Halloween buy
34 Organ part
36 Practice for a fight
38 Small thicket
40 Open, in a way
- 8 Completely
9 Austen book
10 Optimistic
16 Holly-wood's Holbrook
18 Fork feature
19 Dupe
21 Orderly
23 Field yield
24 "Trinity" author
25 Quick look
27 Went by
30 "— not for me to say"
33 Craze
34 Work the checkout
35 Shredded
37 Pathet-ically small
39 City trains
41 Congress creation
42 Pod item



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-28

CRYPTOQUOTE

PXQ RDB BOCON WOI D RQH

XZ IOD TDNWO OBXQWA XN D

EXXM TXBW OBXQWA IX

VQSI UO. — R.V. TOFSV

Cryptoquote: HARD TIMES REQUIRE FURIOUS DANCING. EACH OF US IS THE PROOF. — ALICE WALKER

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the

store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as

the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE	
14 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C NORWEGIAN EPIC Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: I
15 WED	BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B SERENADE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: **** Berth: E
16 THU	QUEEN ANNE Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: c STAR PRINCESS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 18:00 Berth: I
17 FRI	FREEWINDS [Departure] Arrival: **** Departure: 22:30 Berth: E
19 SUN	GRAND PRINCESS Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: B SCENIC ECLIPSE Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

		4	7					
			2	3				
	3	2	8	4		6		
	7	3		1		8		
								5
		6		8	4			
4		7	3	6	8	5		
6		5						8
3	1		4				6	9

Difficulty: ★★★

4/16

Answer to previous puzzle

2	8	1	5	6	4	9	7	3
6	3	5	7	9	1	4	2	8
7	9	4	3	2	8	1	6	5
5	7	3	8	4	6	2	1	9
9	4	6	2	1	5	3	8	7
8	1	2	9	3	7	6	5	4
3	5	9	6	7	2	8	4	1
4	6	8	1	5	9	7	3	2
1	2	7	4	8	3	5	9	6

Difficulty: ★★★

4/15

Ending the “stigma” of obesity: A national shift toward compassion and science

For decades, the cultural narrative surrounding weight in the United States was built on a foundation of shame. Obesity was framed almost exclusively as a moral failing or a lack of willpower, leaving millions of Americans to navigate a healthcare system that offered little more than the repetitive, often ineffective advice to “eat less and move more.” However, this April marks a historic turning point in the American medical landscape. A profound shift is occurring, as federal health agencies and major medical associations officially move to reclassify obesity not as a lifestyle choice, but as a complex, chronic biological disease.

This change is doing more than just updating medical textbooks; it is systematically dismantling the “stigma” that has prevented millions from seeking and receiving life-saving care. For the readers of this vacation newspaper many of whom are taking time away to focus on their well-being and mental clarity this news represents a breath of fresh air and a new era of medical empathy.

The catalyst for change The primary driver of this shift has been the undeniable success of a new generation of metabolic



A medicine distributor displays packs of Ozempic and Wegovy self-injecting (semaglutide) GLP-1 pre-filled pens at his office in Thane on March 20, 2026.

medications, specifically GLP-1 receptor agonists. These treatments have provided biological proof that weight regulation is controlled by complex hormonal signals in the brain and gut, rather than just “grit.” As these medications have become more accessible, the medical community has witnessed a dramatic reduction in associated chronic conditions, including Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. More recently, groundbreaking research presented this month has linked these metabolic treatments to cancer prevention. By treating the underlying chronic inflammation associated with obesity, doctors are seeing a lower incidence of thirteen different types of cancer. This discovery has prompted insurance providers to re-

consider their coverage models, moving away from “weight loss” as a cosmetic goal and toward “metabolic health” as a preventative necessity.

Beyond the scale The most significant impact of this news, however, is the psychological relief it provides. For the first time, the “blame game” is being retired. □



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Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
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Relacional Tel. 583 5400
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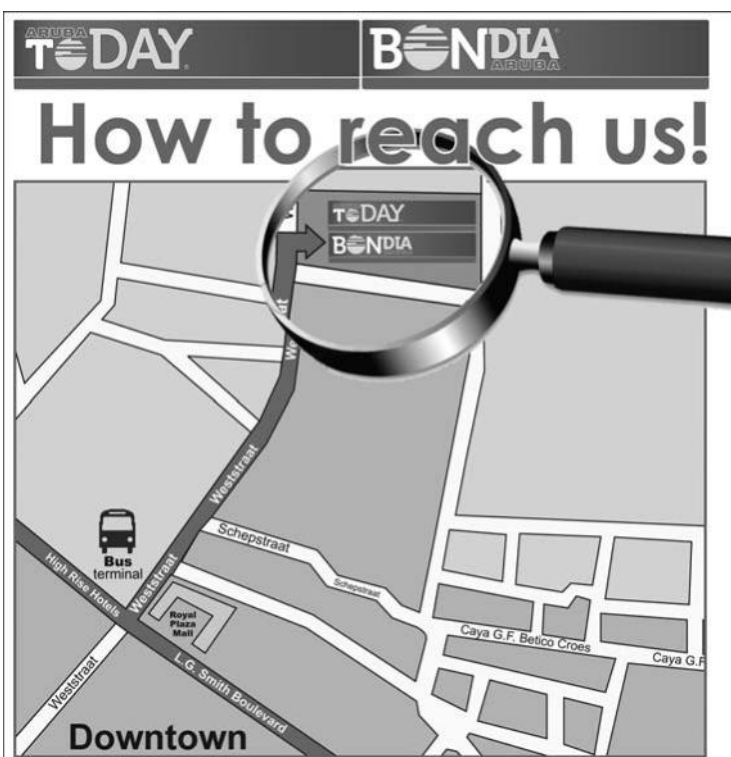
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS





A visitor walks past a placard of Pragmata video game of Capcom during the Gamescom video games trade fair at the Trade Fair Center in Cologne, western Germany, on the first day of the fair on August 20, 2025.

Capcom looks to extend 'golden age' with sci-fi action game 'Pragmata'

Paris, France

Japanese game studio Capcom is taking a big science fiction swing this week with moon-bound action title "Pragmata", juiced by the success of hit franchises like "Resident Evil".

Following the adventures of an astronaut trapped on a moon base overrun by hostile robots, the new game set for release on Friday combines tense shootouts with puzzle-based hacking, allowing players to weaken enemies mid-gunfight.

The game mechanic is creatively represented on screen by an android in the form of a girl who accompanies the protagonist. Professional game reviewers have handed the new title a respectable average score of 86/100, according to aggregation site Metacritic.

Capcom's previous release, February's "Resident Evil Requiem", has already sold more than six million copies, leading the charts in many countries and firing up purchases of the series' back catalogue.

That success likely powered the studio towards its target of 190 billion yen (\$1.2 billion) in net sales in its 2025-26 financial year, which ended on March 31.

Such results would drastically set Capcom apart from a games industry mired in post-pandemic doldrums, with many publishers closing studios and laying off staff to remain solvent or protect profit margins.

- Discipline -

"Capcom is currently in its golden generation and seems to make almost no big mistakes as a corporation," said Serkan Toto of consultancy Kantan Games.

The Osaka-based company, founded in 1983, has been growing for more than 10 years.

A second building is under construction near Capcom HQ to accommodate new staff, after the company surged from 3,200 people in 2022 to more than 3,760 last year.

"Capcom's discipline as a studio has been extremely high for a long time now, with a high focus on quality, building on top of existing hit IPs and shipping on time," Toto said.

"Part of that discipline includes what Capcom is not doing," such as "blindly acquiring other studios" or "jumping on live-service (online multiplayer) games," he added.

Other industry giants have

burned their fingers in recent years, such as Sony with its team-based shooter "Concord" pulled offline after less than two weeks.

- Risk-taking -

Stepping off the beaten path is rarely profitable in the games industry, with even Capcom bearing the scars of previous attempts. "Pragmata" is its third recent effort at a new game universe, after 2023's "Exoprimal" and "Kunitisugami: Path of the Goddess" the following year "both of which failed", noted Toyo Securities analyst Hideki Yasuda.

"Pragmata" will be released for PC, Playstation 5, Xbox Series and Nintendo's new Switch 2 console.

Offering the game on Nintendo's less powerful hardware is a rare choice among high-end productions.

"Since Capcom develops its own game engine (the software that powers features like graphics and physics), it can adapt to the hardware much more quickly than competitors," Yasuda said.

That allows the studio to reach a larger market of players across different platforms. □



AI robot signs are planted into the ground on the National Mall in an act of protest on March 06, 2026 in Washington, DC.

OpenAI announces restricted-access cybersecurity model

Paris, France

Artificial intelligence company OpenAI said Tuesday that it would release its latest cybersecurity model to a limited number of partners, after rival Anthropic also restricted release of a new system that uncovered thousands of vulnerabilities.

The restricted releases by two of the biggest names in the field reflect fears of an AI-enabled arms race between defenders and hackers, who could use the latest tools to cause havoc.

"Our goal is to make these tools as widely available as possible while preventing misuse," OpenAI wrote in a blog post.

Anthropic offered its latest Claude Mythos model to just 40 major tech players last week in an initiative dubbed Project Glasswing.

OpenAI's GPT-5.4-Cyber will be available to "the highest tiers" of people and organisations in its Trusted Access for Cyber (TAC) scheme.

That programme encompasses "thousands of verified individual defenders and hundreds of teams responsible for defending critical software," the company said, without naming any of the partners.

Although not specifically trained for the field, Anthropic's Mythos wowed many cybersecurity experts by uncovering vulnerabilities in widely-used software.

Some of them had gone unnoticed for years or even decades.

Media reported Friday that major American bank chiefs met US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell to discuss the system's dangers to the financial sector.

The Mythos release followed several months of excitement in Silicon Valley about generative AI's growing capability in producing and evaluating computer code.

Those same capabilities enable the models to find bugs and security flaws that could be exploited -- although developers attempt to build in safeguards so their publicly available models will refuse malicious requests.

GPT-5.4-Cyber is "trained to be cyber-permissive" so that defenders can use it to test their own systems for vulnerabilities without encountering as many refusals, OpenAI said.

Anthropic said as it unveiled Mythos that its strict access limits were designed to give defenders a head start in fixing vulnerabilities before they could be exploited by attackers. □

World Cup 2026: Haiti, a ravaged nation whose heart beats for football

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

On a street in a suburb of Port-au-Prince, a dozen teenagers using stones for goalposts are immersed in a Sunday game of football as traffic winds around them.

Haiti has many problems, including political instability, poverty and crime. But through it all, the heart of the nation beats for football.

Haiti's qualification for this summer's World Cup has come like a breath of fresh air for the poorest nation in the Americas, whose nearly 12 million people have long grappled with gang violence that has caused a humanitarian crisis.

"Football is hope and love. It inspires pride and passion," said Salome Sandler Tally, founder and coach of the women's section of Aigle Noir AC, a professional club based in the Haitian capital.

"Qualifying for the World Cup is something special for a country that loves football so deeply."

The Grenadiers, as Haiti's team is known, made their only previous appearance in West Germany in 1974.

"It is incredible to have



People play football in Delmas, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on March 22, 2026.

achieved this 52 years later," Tally told AFP.

- 'Pagan ceremonies' -

In early April, the cash-strapped government allocated 264 million gourdes (\$2 million) for the national football team as a qualification bonus and to help pay for World Cup preparations.

Haiti will face Brazil, Morocco, and Scotland in Group C. Their games will be played in the United

States, which is co-hosting the tournament with Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19.

In their World Cup qualifying campaign, Haiti did not play a single match on home soil.

The nation's main venue the Sylvio Cator Stadium has been closed since February 2024 as it is located in a Port-au-Prince neighborhood controlled by gangs, as is about 90 percent of the capital.

But the "beautiful game" is played everywhere by people who are barefoot, in flip-flops or in sneakers. They have matches on asphalt, dirt or worn-out artificial turf in neighborhood leagues, inter-school competitions, and tournaments involving both professional and amateur clubs.

Patrice Dumont, a former senator and sports columnist, said that in Haiti, a deeply religious nation,

summer holiday leagues "are sites of pagan ceremonies that would make even the most devout fanatics blanche" -- an apparent reference to the charged atmosphere at the matches.

"You see them in every community provided there is space ranging from three-a-side matches to full 11-a-side games, always drawing massive crowds of spectators," he said.

Evens Lezin, a 49-year-old amateur player, said qualification for the World Cup will give "hope" to Haiti's youth.

"We can move forward, but it requires discipline," he said.

"Nowadays, many young people are delinquent. They struggle with alcohol, they smoke and they lack healthy recreational pursuits. But football can offer an escape."

- In every conversation -

The topic of football finds its way into every conversation. It bridges generational and social divides, and is talked about in restaurants, supermarkets, in living rooms and over the airwaves. □

Swiatek returns with dominant win on Stuttgart clay

Stuttgart, Germany

Iga Swiatek cruised to a straight-sets victory over Laura Siegemund on Wednesday in Stuttgart in her opening match of the clay-court season and first under new coach Francisco Roig.

The former world number one, whose previous outing was a surprise early exit at the hands of compatriot Magda Linette at the Miami Open last month, saw off home hope Siegemund 6-2, 6-3 in the last 16.

Swiatek parted ways with Wim Fissette following her second-round loss in Miami before linking up with Roig, who was part of Rafael Nadal's coaching team for many years.

The six-time Grand Slam champion has struggled for form so far this season, failing to reach a semi-

final.

But Swiatek looked at home back on clay, the surface on which she has won 10 WTA titles including four French Open trophies, easily swatting aside Siegemund.

The Pole, who received a first-round bye as the third seed, broke serve five times in total as Siegemund never threatened an upset.

Swiatek will face either Alycia Parks or Mirra Andrejeva in the quarter-finals. Andrejeva claimed a battling 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 win in the first round to eliminate reigning champion Jelena Ostapenko.

After winning the 500-level event in Linz last week, the world number nine has started her clay-court season in fine fettle.

Andrejeva raced into a

2-0 lead in the round of 32 match in Germany, before Ostapenko clawed back level.

But the 18-year-old immediately regained the initiative by breaking in the fifth game to edge ahead once more.

The Russian creaked at the last though as back-to-back double faults when serving for the opening set at 5-4 and deuce let Ostapenko back in.

Ostapenko took full advantage of that reprieve by winning the next two games to claim the set, sealing the deal with a brutal cross-court backhand winner on Andrejeva's serve. Andrejeva hit back by breaking the Latvian in the third game of the second frame.

Despite another untimely double fault at deuce



Iga Swiatek of Poland returns a shot to Magda Linette of Poland on Day 3 of the Miami Open Presented by Itau at Hard Rock Stadium on March 19, 2026 in Miami Gardens, Florida.

when serving for the set, Andrejeva held her nerve this time to hold and force a decider.

After exchanging breaks early in the third set, Andrejeva pounced on Ostapenko's serve to get ahead 5-4 as she claimed victory in her first-ever meeting

with the 2017 Roland Garros champion.

American Parks defeated Germany's Noma Noha Akugue in straight sets. Earlier, fifth seed Jasmine Paolini collapsed to a first-round 6-2, 6-2 defeat against world number 79 Zeynep Sonmez. □

Ball hero and villain as Hornets sting Heat, Blazers eclipse Suns

Los Angeles, United States
LaMelo Ball was hero and villain as the Charlotte Hornets sent the Miami Heat tumbling out of the NBA play-in tournament with a thrilling 127-126 overtime victory on Tuesday.

Charlotte had never won a win-or-go-home post-season game in 12 previous attempts and looked in danger of extending that record after blowing a 125-120 lead with 26 seconds remaining to allow Miami to edge ahead 126-125. After Miami star Tyler Herro sank a superb corner three-pointer to make it 125-123, Ball carelessly turned over possession and then gave away three free-throws with a rash lunge on Herro.



LaMelo Ball #1 of the Charlotte Hornets fouls Tyler Herro #14 of the Miami Heat in overtime during their game at Spectrum Center on April 14, 2026 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Herro drained all three shots to give Miami the lead with just nine seconds left.

Ball though made amends with a determined driving layup to make it 127-126 before an athletic block from Miles Bridges snuffed out Miami's last-gasp attempt to win it.

"We stuck with it and ground it out," Ball said. "We wasn't hitting our threes, all the shots weren't hitting, but we stuck with it."

Ball was at the centre of controversy over an incident in the second quarter which led to Miami star Bam Adebayo hobbling out of the game.

After being blocked during a drive to the basket, Ball reached out and tripped Adebayo with a tug on his standing leg, sending the Miami star crashing to the hardwood. He played no further part in the game. Miami coach Erik Spoelstra was furious that Ball escaped an ejection.

"The referees are there for what? How did they not see that? I don't want this to be an excuse, Charlotte was incredible at the end," Spoelstra fumed.

"I don't think that's cute. I don't think it's funny. I think it's a stupid play. It's a dangerous play. Our best player is out.

"(LaMelo) should be penalized for that. I don't think that belongs in the game, tripping guys, shenanigans. Someone has got to see that. And he should have been thrown out of the game for that."

The victory means Charlotte, beaten in their two previous appearances in the play-in tournament in 2021 and 2022, remain alive in the postseason while Miami are eliminated.

Charlotte will face the loser of Wednesday's Eastern Conference play-in game between the eighth-seeded Orlando Magic and seventh-seeded Philadelphia 76ers. □



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